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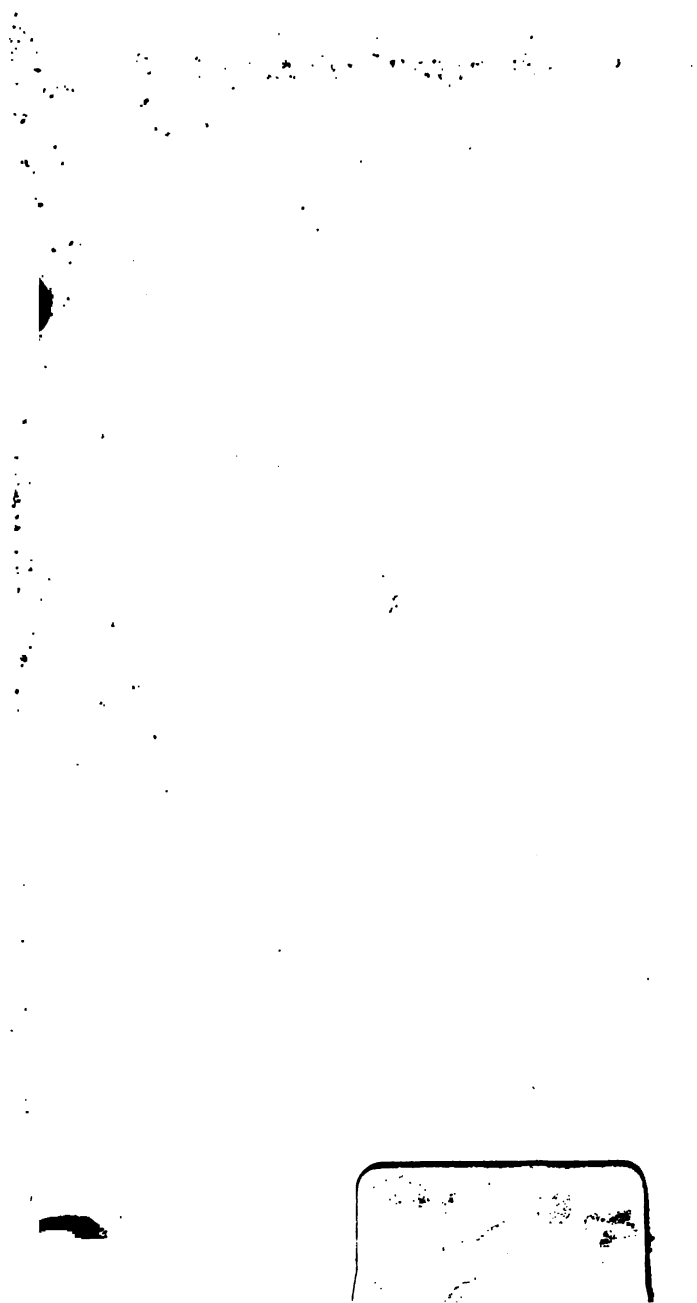
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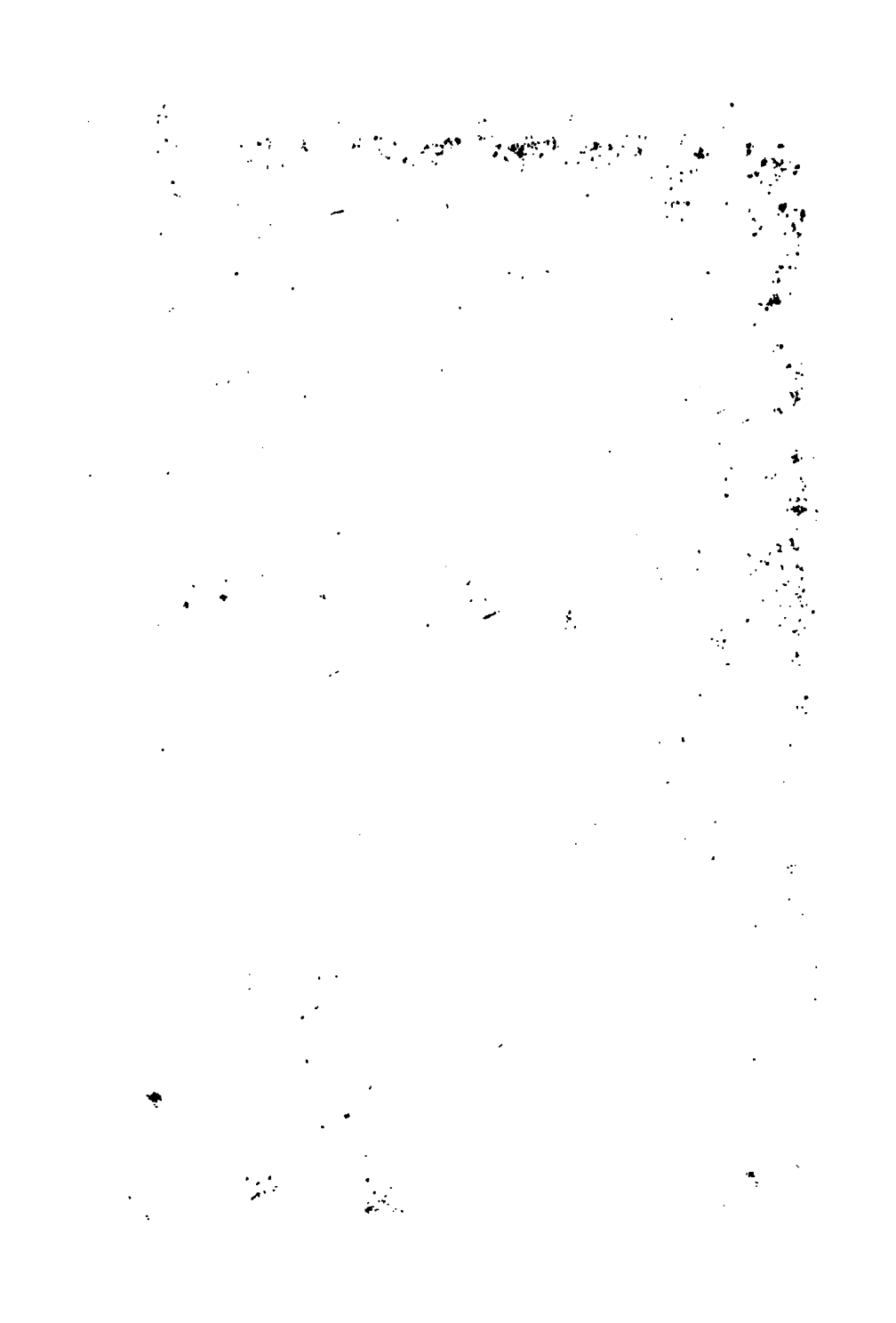
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*HOW TO USE  
OUR EYES*

JOHN BROWNING  
P. R. A. S.









HOW TO USE OUR EYES.



# HOW TO USE OUR EYES

AND

*HOW TO PRESERVE THEM BY THE  
AID OF SPECTACLES*

BY

JOHN BROWNING, F.R.A.S. F.R.M.S. ETC.

OPTICIAN TO HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT, THE ROYAL SOCIETY, THE ROYAL  
OBSERVATORIES OF GREENWICH AND EDINBURGH, AND THE OBSERVATORIES  
OF KEW, CAMBRIDGE, DURHAM, UTRECHT, MELBOURNE, ETC. ETC.



*WITH THIRTY-SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS*

London

CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1883

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## PREFACE.

SOME months since I wrote a series of papers for *Knowledge* under the same title that I have given to this book. Their publication brought upon me an extensive correspondence, with many requests for further information about spectacles, a subject upon which it has become evident to me that there exists considerable interest.

In republishing these papers in a separate form I have tried to give the information asked for by my numerous correspondents. Owing to this, the matter has grown under my hands to about ten times the original amount, and the illustrations have increased somewhat in proportion.

My endeavour has been to set down, *in the simplest words I could find that would express my meaning*, the results of the experience I have gained

in the construction and adaptation of spectacles during the last thirty years.

In this new and more complete form I sincerely trust that what I have written may prove, if not interesting, at least useful.

JOHN BROWNING.

63 STRAND, LONDON.

*September, 1883.*

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# HOW TO USE OUR EYES

## *THE ART OF SEEING.*

‘The eye cannot see when the mind is blind.’

*Arab Proverb.*

It might at first thought appear that it cannot be necessary for any person to learn to see. A moment's consideration will show that this is a mistake. Before an artist can draw any object well, he must be able to see the most delicate lights and shades upon its surface. I have often been surprised at the remark that ‘a photograph is much more beautiful than the landscape it was taken from. Now I know the speaker *could not see* the landscape.

It is stated that a lady observed to the great artist Turner, pointing to one of his pictures, ‘Dear me! Mr. Turner, I never saw anything like that!’ ‘No, madam,’ answered Turner; ‘don't you wish you could?’

Those who are in the habit of using microscopes or telescopes can see minute details of an object which would not be visible to a person who looked



through one of those instruments for the first time. The remark is frequently heard that a particular person is an excellent judge of some article. It will generally be found that the person can *see* differences in various samples of the article which are not visible to most people.

A good photograph of a statue appears almost solid. This is due entirely to the delicate *shades* being faithfully represented in the photograph. There are but few persons whose sight would be keen enough to enable them to detect the whole of these shades on the original statue. This is the principal reason that a drawing, however beautiful or truthful, never looks as solid as a photograph.

I need do no more than briefly allude to the enormous extent to which the optician's art has increased the scope of our vision, enabling us by the aid of powerful telescopes to view objects at so great a distance that they would otherwise be invisible ; and on the other hand to see easily with powerful microscopes objects close to us which would also be invisible on account of their excessive minuteness. Yet it may be doubtful whether the advantages gained from these contrivances are so great to humanity as those derived from the use of spectacles as aids to failing vision.

During the last few years great improvements have been made in spectacles by skilful oculists and opticians, but of these improvements little or nothing is generally known.

My object is principally to give a popular account

of these improvements and their application ; but I must begin by giving a brief description of the human eye.

Fig. 1 is a diagram of the eye, which shows the Cornea, the Iris, the Ciliary Muscle, the Crystalline Lens, the Aqueous Humour, the Retina, and the Choroid Coat.

The outer white coating of the eye is called the sclerotic. The central portion of the eye is known as the cornea ; behind this is the iris, the coloured

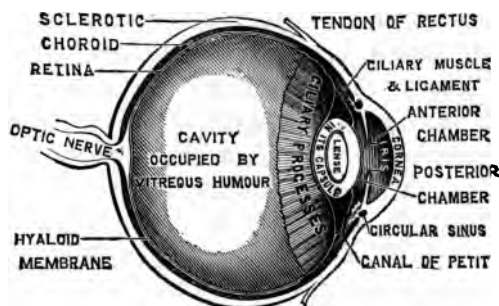


Fig. 1.

portion of the eye. There is an opening in the centre of the iris known as the pupil ; this is simply an aperture through which light can pass. This aperture opens when the eye is in a faint light, and closes when it is exposed to a strong light. The space between the cornea and the iris is filled with a watery fluid. Just behind the iris is the crystalline lens. This is popularly supposed to be the pupil of the eye, and you have doubtless heard the

expression, 'having the pupil taken out of the eye.' Now, you could no more take the pupil out of an eye than you could take the keyhole out of a door, as it is simply an opening which admits light into the crystalline lens.

Outside the iris is the ciliary muscle, a ring of muscular fibre. This muscle makes the crystalline lens more convex whenever we look at an object within a few feet of us.

The whole space of the eyeball is filled with the vitreous humour, a jelly-like substance.

The back part of the inside of the eyeball is covered with a most exquisitely sensitive nerve tissue, known as the retina. On this retina a picture of any object in front of the eye is formed. The optic nerve extends from the brain to the back of the eye, and small branches of it extend all over the retina. These convey to the brain the information as to the kind of picture which is formed on the retina. Outside the sensitive surface or retina there is a coating of black pigment, known as the choroid coat, which serves as a background to stop rays of light which might otherwise pass through the retina.

There are several large muscles round the outside of the eyeball. By means of these the eye may be moved to either side, or upwards or downwards, so as to get a clear view of any object.

Fig. 2 is not an anatomical, but a rough mechanical and optical model of the eye. It is made of an opal lamp globe, with large openings at

the top and bottom. On one side is a common bull's-eye ; this represents the crystalline lens. The other opening is covered with a piece of partially transparent tracing-paper. This receives the image formed by the bull's-eye or crystalline lens. It will be seen that the letter A appears reversed ; in simple language, it is upside down. So are the images of the objects we see on our retina ; they are all upside down.

One of my scientific friends, the brother of one of our most distinguished musical composers, has taught himself to read print when held upside down. Occasionally he will read a book in this manner when he is travelling in an omnibus or a railway carriage. It is not long before some passenger draws his attention to the fact that he is holding the book the wrong way. Their astonish-

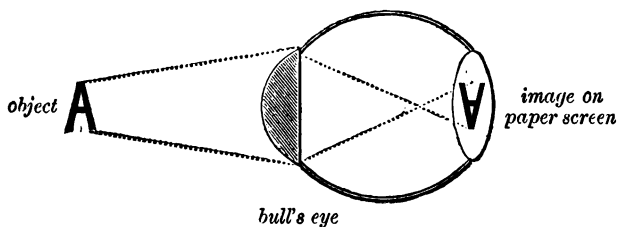


Fig. 2.

ment is great when he quietly informs them that he prefers reading with the book held in that direction. I am afraid that occasionally they have doubts of my friend's sanity. If I have explained the action of the eye with sufficient clearness, you will at once understand that the letters of the book held upside

down really appear upon my friend's retina in an erect position.

Sometimes the question is put to me, 'Will you believe your own eyes?' To this I reply, 'As an optician, certainly not.'

Numerous ways in which the eyes can be deceived are no doubt familiar to you. The best known of all is, perhaps, that known as Pepper's Ghost. In this optical illusion a number of persons appear to be upon a stage or platform in front of the audience ; in reality they are before the stage, but out of view of the audience.

How easily our eyes may be deceived may be proved by a very simple experiment which you may make. Take a large card—the size is of no consequence. Make a large black circular spot on the card, on the right-hand side, one inch in diameter ; then, at a distance of three inches from it, on the left-hand side, make a black dot the size of a pin's head. If you hold this card at exactly one foot from your right eye, and look intently at the small dot, the large black circle will not be visible. This arises from the fact that a portion of the retina is not sensitive to light. The invisible portion is so large that it will suffice to prevent a man's face from being seen at six or seven feet distance.

When looking for very minute stars, or other faint objects difficult to see, practical astronomers look for them sideways, out of the corners of their eyes. The centre of the retina is not so sensi-

tive as the outer portions, which are much less used.

There is good reason for believing that the eye takes a photograph of every object looked at intently.

Rabbits have been held before a window for a few seconds and then killed. A picture of the window has been found on their retina.

The impression on the retina is generally said to last about the sixteenth part of a second, but this depends upon the brilliancy of the object and the length of time we look at it.

#### A FEW WORDS ABOUT LIGHT.

Now I must say a few words about light.

Light is the cause of all colour. Colour is only a sensation in the brain, caused by a particular kind of light being reflected from an object into the eyes. We say trees are green, but they would not be green unless they were lighted by a light which contained green rays. This can be proved by a simple, yet perfectly convincing, experiment.

Place several pieces of paper of various bright colours on a large piece of white paper, taking care to avoid the use of yellow. Now illuminate these with a spirit-lamp which has had salt sprinkled on the wick; the whole of the brightly coloured papers will appear a colourless grey; the reason being that the spirit-lamp giving out only a pure yellow light it is not capable of rendering the other colours visible.

## COLOUR-BLINDNESS.

About one person in every twenty-five is to some extent colour-blind—that is, cannot distinguish accurately between colours. In extreme cases such persons cannot distinguish between red and green. This defect often exists without being suspected. The worst case I have ever known was that of a workman who had been for years in my employ. One day, I gave him a number of photographed stereoscopic slides to sort into two lots—one coloured, and the other plain. Soon after he had sorted them I examined them. They were divided into two lots, composed almost equally of coloured and plain slides mixed together. This induced me to test his eyes for colour-blindness, and I found, to my surprise, that he could not tell the difference between a piece of black cloth and a piece of scarlet.

This defect may be of the greatest importance.

Both on railways and on ships, lamps with coloured glasses are used for signalling at night, and flags in the daytime. Any sailor, guard, or engine-driver suffering from colour-blindness might be the cause of a fatal accident by mistaking the colour of the signal shown.

All such persons should have their sight tested.

I have contrived a spectroscope in which there is a complete riband or rainbow of colour, with an arrangement by means of which I can shut out all but a small portion of this coloured rainbow, and

allow only a small strip of any particular colour to appear. The person whose sight is being tested is then asked to name the colour that is visible.

An easy way of testing the sense of colour is to give a person two or three skeins of Berlin wool of different colours. Then give him a bundle of wool of mixed colours, and ask him to match the colours of them.

This test is not to be compared to that with the spectroscope for accuracy.

But under certain circumstances, even persons whose colour-sense is most acute and accurate may be deceived as to colour.

### COMPLEMENTARY COLOURS.

When a coloured object is looked at for some time, if the eye be directed to another object which is grey or colourless, this object will appear to be strongly coloured, but just the opposite colour to that of the first object the eye had been regarding.

By the expression the opposite colour, I mean the complementary colour—that is, the colour which added to the first colour would produce white.

Blue causes the grey portion of the object to appear yellow, while yellow causes the grey portion to look blue. Red causes the grey to appear green, while green makes the grey look red.

It must not, however, be supposed that if green



paint be mixed with red, or orange paint with blue, that white will be the result.

Owing to the impurity in an optical sense of all our colours, we obtain only dark greys by such mixtures. But, if you reflect the complementary colours from the *spectrum*, in which the colour is optically pure, one on the other, you can make colours that will be very different from those you will obtain by the mixture of pigments; and by using carefully-selected pieces of coloured glass in two lanterns, colours will be produced very different from those obtained by the mixture of pigments.

The colours of stained glass are much purer and brighter than those of any of our pigments.

There are three ways by which colours can be mixed: 1st, by grinding up the colours together; 2nd, by laying coats of colour over each other; 3rd, by making narrow lines or dots of the colours close to each other. The two last methods are but little known or used, yet they are the methods which give the most beautiful as well as the most scientific results.

On a *revolving* wheel place a disc covered with black and yellow paint mixed together. The disc appears green. On another disc let a portion of the surface be coloured yellow and a portion black. On rotating this disc the colour will be not dark green, but dark yellow. Mix blue and red, and then blue and yellow, first by mixing the paints, and then by colouring a portion of each disc, and note the different result obtained by the two methods.

The diagrams invented by Mr. Gorham, the inventor of the colour-top, will show the appearances I have just described. In those diagrams the grey portion in a blue disc appears yellow, the grey portion of a red disc appears green, and the grey portion of a green disc appears a reddish chocolate.

It is from want of knowledge of this fact that many artists over-colour their pictures. They make their shadows too blue in what they would call a warm picture—that is, a picture of a red or orange or yellow tone of colour, and the shadows in a cold or bluish picture they make too red. This in another direction proves the necessity of learning to see. Such artists require to be shown that perfectly colourless shadows in a bluish picture will look red, and equally colourless shadows in a reddish picture will appear blue.

Although we cannot with our unassisted eyes tell how pure or impure colours or paints are, we can detect their impurities by means of a spectroscope.

There are many coloured liquids and glasses which look to us almost exactly alike. Now let us see how they look when we analyze or cross-question them by sending the colour through a spectroscope. Take, for instance, blood, cochineal, permanganate of potash, and chlorophyll. By using a miniature spectroscope, blood may be distinguished from other liquids similar in colour, and an idea may be formed whether the blood is fresh. This has been of use in examining the clothes of a suspected murderer, and has led to detection. A quantity of

dried blood that would lie on a pin's head could be analyzed by this process.

One instance in which this method was applied seemed to me of great interest.

Some years since, a murder was committed in Cannon Street, in the City. The housekeeper in charge of some offices was killed in the passage of the house about eight o'clock in the evening. Shortly afterwards, a man, a distant relative of the murdered woman, was arrested on suspicion. On inspecting his clothes a number of small, dark red stains were found upon them. These were scraped off the cloth by an eminent chemist. This chemist brought half the amount of the dried substance to me. Half of this minute quantity I sent to a distinguished scientific friend, and half I experimented on with the spectroscope.

The amount being so small we could not make a sufficient number of experiments with it to enable us to say positively what substance it was, but both my friend and myself came to the conclusion that it was certainly *not blood*. Had blood been present there would have been visible to an educated eye some very faint lines, known as blood-bands, in the spectrum.

When the trial came on the man proved an *alibi*, and explained that the dark spots on his clothes were red shellac varnish, which he had got on him at a hat-maker's who used it for stiffening the shapes of his hats.

### HOW TO PRESERVE OUR EYESIGHT.

Now for some important hints for preserving your eyesight. Never look at an intensely bright light for any length of time, or a permanent image may be formed on the retina. Avoid, most carefully, exposing the eyes to a very bright light after they have been in darkness, as such changes are injurious, and have been known to produce blindness.

When using a microscope, always incline it as much as possible towards the horizontal direction. Most persons use the microscope almost upright. Looking down into the microscope in this position gorges the eye with blood by stopping the circulation in the neck.

A Newtonian reflecting telescope is very superior to an achromatic telescope for those who have any fear of straining their eyes, as the stars and other heavenly bodies can be seen best with this kind of telescope when they are directly overhead.

If a person wishes to look at them when they are thus situated, he must lie down on his back if he uses an achromatic telescope. With a reflecting telescope the celestial objects may be viewed when they are overhead by the observer looking horizontally into the telescope.

When adjusting a very bright lamp-flame, if you wish to do it slowly, look at the flame through a

slit formed by almost closing two of the fingers. This will protect the eyes greatly.



Fig. 3.

#### HOW TO READ BY LAMPLIGHT.

Always turn your back to the source of light when you are reading, so that the light may fall on to the book, instead of coming into your eyes.

While I was correcting for the press the proof of the above remarks on reading by lamplight, the following excellent paragraph on the subject, by Mr. Mattieu Williams, appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. As the writer is both a scientific

and a literary man, his opinion, founded on experience, appears to me of exceptional value.

‘I am now wearing spectacles, and otherwise suffering, as are thousands of others, simply because up to about forty-five years of age I usually worked at reading and writing with my face to the light, which is the worst possible position. With my back to the light I can now read or write for two or three consecutive hours without visual inconvenience; with a front light, half an hour produces pain and inflammation. The reason is simple enough. The light should fall on the book or the paper, and the eye should be in shadow—the shadow of the head. If anybody doubts this, let him try the experiment of reading small print first with his back to a window that rises well above the height of his head, and then with his face to the same window. Then, in order to explain the difference he will experience, let him, in an otherwise dark room, stand before a looking-glass, hold a candle behind his head, and observe in the glass the size of the black opening to the retina of his eyes. Now bring the candle round, and the contraction of the iris will at once be strikingly shown; the central black window of the eye will be reduced to half its former size. Then let him try the one-sided light—the left-hand light—that is so dogmatically recommended. He will find that the left iris is far less expanded than the right; the right pupil is largest, *i.e.* the eyes are forced to act irregularly, or with an unequal strain upon that exquisitely constructed system of muscular fibres constituting the *sphincter pupillæ*. As the protection of the retina depends upon the ready response of these to the light, their healthy action and preservation for old age are of the greatest importance. There is a

collateral advantage of the back light in the case of children. If the windows are fairly high, the shadow of the head only falls on the book when the pupils lean forward, and to escape from this they avoid the pernicious habit of thus leaning and pressing the breast-bone against the edge of the



Fig. 4.

desk. The best light of all is that which comes from above in such a manner that the eyes are protected from glare by the shadow of the superciliary ridge, or overhang of the forehead and eyebrows, while there are no shadows whatever on the desks or the books. But this is only obtainable where there are no rooms above. Billiard-players

perfectly understand the advantages of such top lighting, and arrange accordingly.'

Always lean well back when reading, and hold the book up, as shown in the engraving (Fig. 3). Do not lean forward and face the light, as in Fig. 4.

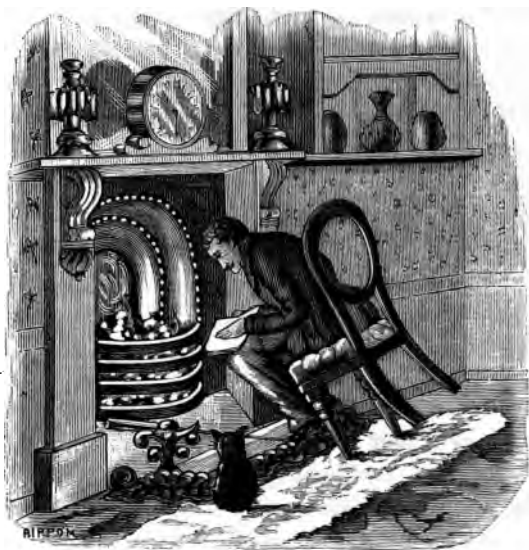


Fig. 5.

Never read by firelight in the position shown in Fig. 5. Myopia, or short sight, is often produced, particularly in young people, by reading in an imperfect light.

Never read books printed in small type if you



can get large-type editions. There is no doubt that reading in railway trains when in motion is very injurious to the eyesight, on account of the vibration causing the letters to move about before the eyes. I fear it is of no use for me to say, Do not read while you are travelling; but if you *will* read, let it be books or newspapers printed clearly in large type, and if you read at night-time in the train, carry a reading-lamp, and suspend it behind you above your shoulder on your right-hand side, and lean back in the carriage, so as to bring your book near to the light. The lamps in railway carriages never give sufficient light to read by without injuring the sight.

Ladies should never do any needlework with dark materials by artificial light.

#### GENERAL CARE OF THE EYES.

The use of tinted writing-papers is very beneficial to the eyes, but the colours chosen should be grey, neutral tint, or bluish-green; brown, pink, yellow, or strongly yellowish-green should be avoided.

Those who suffer in any way from impaired vision and have much writing to do, should use the new type-writers, which print one letter for each key that is touched. The letters engraved on the keys are about a quarter of an inch in height, and there is no strain on the eyes beyond looking at these. The writer may lean back in a chair and change from one position to another without ceasing

to work, and there is none of the cramping effect upon one set of muscles, so often experienced in writing.

Looking for any length of time through wire-gauze window-blinds is injurious to the sight. An inspector of the detective police came to me respecting his eyes; he had nearly blinded himself by looking through such blinds for several weeks together. The use of these ugly dusty screens is, however, happily being discontinued in favour of light wire blinds, which have many advantages. Ladies' veils when thick frequently injure their sight.

I have spoken of the desirability of keeping the eyes cool. It is a good plan to sluice the eyes well every morning with cold water. Constantly practising this tends to strengthen and preserve the sight.

#### THE CARE OF INFANTS' AND CHILDREN'S EYES.

To the precautions we should take with regard to our own eyes, I must add a few words of warning respecting those of our children.

Never allow infants to be exposed to the full glare of the sun. Men shade their eyes with the brims of their hats, and ladies carry parasols. But infants wear nothing which projects over the forehead; they are constantly to be seen in perambulators with their unprotected faces turned full towards the sun, and I have frequently seen them

left by careless people in such a position, with their poor little eyes closed, moving uneasily about, and unable to find any relief from their suffering.

It is difficult to estimate the amount of mischief which may be done to their eyes or health by such thoughtless cruelty.

In schools children generally suffer from deficiency of light, after having while infants, out of doors, been exposed to it far too much.

When, studying in schoolrooms where there is a deficiency of light, children stoop over their books, or in any way bring them close to their eyes in order to assist their imperfect view of the letters, the vision becomes strained, and is often seriously impaired; and if the practice be long continued, a permanent change takes place in the vision, so that it becomes myopic, or short-sighted. This I shall treat of more fully in a separate chapter. Under the head of 'test-types,' I have described how to test children's eyes, to ascertain if they require spectacles.

#### THE USE OF COLOURED GLASSES.

Coloured glasses are not resorted to nearly so much as they should be. For writing or reading, blue are the best, and some prefer this colour for walking; but generally it will be found that neutral tint or London smoke are the pleasantest, and they are equally beneficial for outdoor use.

Most persons will require only plane and parallel

glasses; and here I must caution my readers that such lenses should always be made of optical glass, *coloured all through and worked and polished on both surfaces*. The greater part of the coloured glass spectacles and folders sold are made of white glass, which is coloured only on one side, and not worked at all, but simply fire-polished. Such glasses have many imperfections, as seeds, specks, blebs, or veins, besides unequally polished places, scratches, and other surface-markings.

Owing to the dark colour of the glass these escape notice when looking at them; but they cannot fail to be prejudicial to the eyesight of those who wear them, who have to look *through* them. Whatever spectacles are worn, whether for short or long sight, for walking or reading, coloured glass or clear, they should be worn well away from the eyes, for two reasons—the eyes should have free play of air over them and be kept cool, and the lenses and frames should be kept well off the eye-lashes. If in the involuntary winking of the eye, which is always going on, and should never be restrained, the lashes touch any part of the spectacles, the eyes will soon become irritated and often inflamed if they are naturally weak.

Visitors to our seaside watering-places should wear coloured glass spectacles or folders to moderate the intense glare of the reflected sunlight from the sea and sand, from the roads and pavements, and from the white houses, as it frequently causes headaches,

which are wrongly ascribed to biliousness, and eventually impairs the vision.

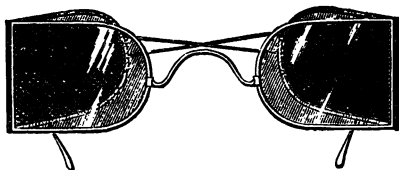


Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.

Figs. 6 and 7 show the best forms of coloured glass eye-protectors made. The last-named have gauze sides to more effectually exclude dust, wind, or insects.

Dr. Alfred Haviland, of Douglas, Isle of Man, has made the practical suggestion that a small quantity of soot might with advantage be mixed with the cement which is so freely used to cover the houses, whenever the fronts have a southern aspect.

I find blue glasses the most beneficial, violet comes next, and smoke or neutral tint last; but either grey smoke or neutral tint are, as I have said, pleasanter than blue to wear, as they do not appreciably alter the colour of any object. Many

persons who read in rooms into which the sun falls, would do well to have spectacles made of coloured glass lenses instead of the ordinary white glass, as this would save their eyesight.

#### WHEN SPECTACLES ARE REQUIRED.

Here I may with advantage give more information about the use of spectacles—a subject on which the public have less general knowledge than any with which I am acquainted. As a natural result, there is probably more quackery practised in this direction than in any other.

It is, above all, when we have passed middle life, and are compelled to apply to the optician for artificial aid to vision, that we require to know ‘how to use our eyes.’

We are all interested in spectacles, for those of us who do not require them ourselves will need them, and have relatives or friends who do; and we may save them from having their pockets picked and their eyesight injured.

There is no particular age at which spectacles are certain to be required. Men can seldom see well without them after they are 45, or women after 40. Very often, indeed, women require them at 30, and do themselves irremediable injury by not using them. In many cases they fear looking old, but more often they think that the longer they can put off using them the better. In this way they frequently postpone using spectacles for two

or even three years. When they are compelled to take to them *they have impaired their vision*, and require stronger glasses than they would have done, and often then they cannot recover the full clearness of vision they formerly possessed, and which they might have preserved to extreme old age had they but known 'how to use their eyes.' Once you cannot see clearly by lamplight or gaslight without holding the object farther from you than usual, you require spectacles, and by working or reading without them you may bring on distressing headaches, or do your eyes an injury which no optician can afterwards remedy.

A correspondent of mine has aptly named the stage at which spectacles are first required as becoming 'Bradshaw blind.'

As soon as it is found that the figure 3 cannot be readily distinguished from 5 in the popular railway guide by artificial light, spectacles should at once be obtained.

A worse mistake than postponing getting a pair of spectacles suited to your own sight, is to use your father's or mother's spectacles, if you have such by you. By doing this, you may in a few months age your eyes as much as with the use of proper spectacles they would have aged in as many years. These remarks apply quite as much to gentlemen as to ladies. *Spectacles when required are a luxury, not a nuisance.*

Another mistake, commonly made by short-sighted persons, is wearing the same spectacles for reading

and walking. This can seldom be done without straining the eyes.

Nearly all short-sighted persons require two pairs of spectacles, and these often differ widely in focus. Occasionally those suited for reading require to be only half the focus of those suitable for walking.

At times the power of accommodation is so deficient that three pairs of spectacles are required to see objects at different distances, say, from reading-distance to the horizon.

Different spectacles should, as a rule, always be worn for playing music from those used for reading, because the music is placed on the instrument at a greater distance from the player than the book is held while reading.

Although, of course, the power of adapting the vision or seeing clearly is, as a rule, first lost for close objects, yet occasionally it is first lost for distant objects.

I have known persons who fancied that their eyesight was seriously and permanently impaired from being unaware of this fact.

A pair of short-sighted spectacles gave them clear vision directly.

Spectacles used for reading only should not be worn high up on the nose close to the eyes, as is generally the case.

In this position they prevent the free play of air to the eyes and frequently touch the eyelashes and so irritate the eyes. When worn as low down on the nose as can conveniently be done, they assist



the vision more, and allow the wearer to look over the top edges at all distant objects, as well as avoiding the above-named evils.

No attention is generally paid to a pair of spectacles fitting the face, yet, to obtain the full benefit from them, they ought to fit the wearer's face so well that the centres of the glasses come exactly opposite to the pupils of the eyes. It is curious that people who would never think of wearing a dress or coat unless it fitted them, will



Fig. 8.

wear any pair of spectacles, though the result is more disfiguring and is injurious to the eyes. It is necessary for an optician to keep at least seven different patterns of spectacles to select from, and even then spectacles must often be made to fit the face, and this should really add very little to their cost. Spectacles to suit different personal peculiarities require to vary in many ways.

They must have high, medium, low and nearly

straight bridges; long, medium and short sides, and must differ greatly in the width of the eyes. If the spectacles are either too wide or too narrow, as



Fig. 9.

shown in the diagrams, they have a tendency to produce double-vision, that is, to make every object



Fig. 10.

appear to be doubled. In Fig. 8 the spectacles are too wide; in Fig. 9 they are too narrow, and in Fig. 10 they are the correct width.



Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.



Fig. 13.



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.



Fig. 16.



Fig. 17.



Fig. 18.



Fig. 19.

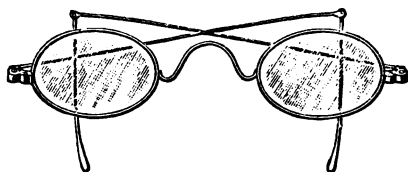


Fig. 20.

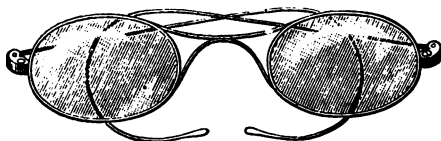


Fig. 21.

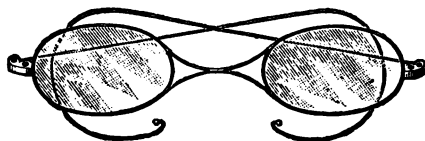


Fig. 22

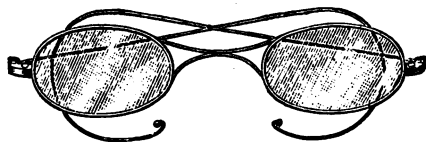


Fig. 23.

Figs. 11 to 16, which are drawn exactly half the size of the real spectacles, show six of the widths most required.

Again, there are Pantascopic frames (Fig. 17) and Artists' frames (Fig. 18), both made to enable the wearer to look over the upper edges of the lenses at any distant object; and Pulpit frames (Fig. 19), which are used to look through the lenses at distant objects only. Also frames with double sides (Fig. 20) and hook sides (Fig. 21); and yet again, frames with X bridges (Fig. 22) and frames with K bridges (Fig. 23).

Two things I must earnestly warn you never to do. Never use a single eye-glass (Fig. 24). Never keep a pair of spectacles on your face that are suited for reading when you are walking about, or, in fact, one moment after you have done looking at some near object through them.

While I was reading this for the press I received a letter from a lady who had fallen downstairs in her spectacles and broken them. Most likely the spectacles were the *cause* of the accident.

Very recently I saw a gentleman in the Charing-cross Railway Station wearing a pair of reading

spectacles. With these on he was trying to make out the time by the station clock. This clock must be about thirty or forty feet high, and he was straining his eyes to see it through a pair of spectacles which would not show any object clearly at a greater distance than eighteen inches.

By wearing them he was seriously injuring his eyes, and risking an accident in getting in and out of the railway carriage. Fig. 25 illustrates the effect of a person looking at a church clock under similar conditions.

I have traced many accidents to persons who were long-sighted keeping on their spectacles when going downstairs.

The generally-received idea is that the spectacles worn should always be the lowest power the wearer can manage to see with, because the eye should have a slight adjustment left to make for itself. This is entirely wrong. The spectacles worn should fully meet the want of adjustment or focussing power.

*There should be not only no conscious strain, but no unconscious strain on the part of the wearer.*

Sometimes, though not very often, persons imagine that because they have reached a certain age they *must* require spectacles. I recollect one instance of this kind. A well-known admiral came to me and told me that he had never worn spectacles, but he was quite sure he required them.

I gave him a book of test-types, and asked him to tell me the smallest-size type he could read, and

at what distance from the eye he could read it. Having obtained this information, I gave him a pair of very low power spectacles, suitable for a long-sighted person, and then, directly afterwards, a pair suited for a short-sighted person. He said he could see equally well with either. This was just what I expected.

‘Now,’ said I, ‘here is a pair of spectacles that will suit you.’



Fig. 24.

He put them on, and, taking up the book, he said, ‘Oh yes, I can see better with these than with either of the others.’

‘I thought you would,’ was my reply, ‘because if you take them off you will find that they are a pair of spectacle frames—there are no glasses in them!’

Had this gentleman gone to a quack, he would certainly have given him spectacles several years before he required them.

I only wish to say one sentence more on this subject:

Do not believe that any loudly-puffed spectacles can be of special service to you. There is skill, of course, required in making good lenses of fine



Fig. 25.

optical glass or Brazilian pebbles; but there is still more skill required in suiting the spectacles to each particular person's requirements.

How can this skill, only to be acquired by knowledge combined with practice, be possessed by every



watchmaker, chemist, jeweller, or ironmonger, who buys a dozen pairs of spectacles and writes up that he is a PRACTICAL OPTICIAN ?

To be able to suit correctly the majority of persons who apply to him for spectacles, an optician must keep a stock worth several hundred pounds ; and even then, to suit all peculiar cases, he should be able to grind lenses and make special frames as required.

Remember that a pair of spectacles which would exactly suit one person would, in a short time, almost blind another !

I doubt if more than one person out of each dozen receives the full benefit from spectacles that he should do, while there are probably three or four out of each dozen who injure their eyesight by using spectacles unsuited to them.

Year after year I have been pained by people living in the country coming to me for spectacles, when their eyesight had been first injured by using improper lenses. After long consideration I have been able to devise small instruments, which I can send through the post, and from the indications these give I can tell with accuracy what lenses are required. I have suited many cases in this way by correspondence, *when the eyes of the correspondents differed greatly in focus*. I shall have great pleasure in forwarding full particulars to any person, post free.

Lenses of pebble, rock-crystal, or, as it is termed by mineralogists, quartz, keep a clear, bright-

polished surface very much better than glass, and most persons prefer them. A correspondent of *Knowledge* inquired recently if these lenses were not cut at varying angles out of the quartz crystals, and whether this would not cause them to perform badly. My experience is that this matter seldom receives the attention from opticians which it should do. First-class opticians should keep pebble lenses cut truly at right angles to the axis of the crystal, though they are necessarily more expensive.

Such lenses, when tested by polarized light, should give concentric coloured rings. Lenses not cut at right angles to the axis of the crystal give coloured bands.

A great many persons have one eye more sensitive to colour than the other, and this leads me to say that many more persons than would be supposed have two odd eyes. In some, the eyes differ in acuteness of vision or sensitiveness to colour; in others, in focus; and again in others, in their sensitiveness to light. In most cases, when spectacles are required, the difference between the eyes may be corrected by using lenses of different power. To this subject I shall further on devote a short chapter, as it is a matter of considerable importance, though it is commonly passed over by opticians without any attention; indeed I fear, where they possess the skill, they will not take the trouble to determine the amount of the inequality, or to make spectacles which will correct it.

## OLD SIGHT.

*Old sight, or, as it is technically called, presbyopia*, is a condition of the eyes in which the power is wanting to focus them on near objects, and thus see things clearly which are within about twelve or fourteen inches from the face. This condition is generally the result of advancing years, and spectacles with convex lenses to counteract long-sightedness are usually required by men at about the age of 47, and by women at about 45; that is to say, few persons can dispense with spectacles after these ages, without straining their vision and permanently injuring their sight.

But to this rough general rule there are many exceptions. After a severe illness, which greatly enfeebles the system, spectacles for long sight are often required. I have frequently prescribed spectacles for such cases, and after a few weeks diminished the strength of the lenses, and in a few months my client has been able to dispense with them entirely. Occasionally young children are naturally deficient in the power of accommodation, and require spectacles to correct long-sightedness even when they are only 7 or 8 years old.

Sometimes the condition of vision called long-sightedness is brought on between the ages of 16 and 30, through unfairly trying the eyes by reading small print, or making minute drawings, or

doing needlework for a length of time and for many hours continuously by artificial light.

Occasionally for correcting old sight I am asked for periscopic, meniscus, or concavo-convex lenses, by clients who suppose that such lenses are superior to the double convex or double concave forms in general use. The reason such lenses are believed to possess some advantage is, I presume, because they appear to coincide with the outward form of the eye. But the purpose of a spectacle lens should be to produce a distinct image of any object in front of it with as little action on the rays of light which it causes to diverge or converge as possible.

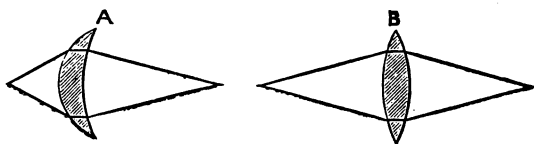


Fig. 26.

This is best effected by the double-convex or double-concave lenses, because they divide the deviation of the rays equally between the two surfaces. This is clearly shown by the two illustrations: (Fig. 26). A is a periscopic lens, and in this it will be seen that the convergence of the rays which pass through it takes place entirely at the first surface; while in B, which represents a section of a double-convex lens, the outer curve of the lens is much less, and the rays suffer convergence equally at both surfaces—that is, as they enter and as they leave the lens.

A highly valued scientific correspondent, Mr. T. S. Bazley, has written me a most suggestive letter. As the questions he asks me may occur to many of my readers, I will transcribe them almost entire; but for the sake of simplicity and clearness I will reply to each query before noting down the next.

Question I.—What is the reason why spectacles of shorter focus are required for presbyopic vision (old sight) by artificial light than by daylight; can the difference of intensity of light account for this sufficiently? Some persons use a very powerful light indeed in the evening. Will the difference in the nature of the light have anything to do with it?

Reply.—It is purely a question of the amount of light. Persons who have used spectacles for years can read without them in sunlight. The stronger spectacles enable the wearer to bring the object to be seen nearer to the eye, and as light increases in the square of the distance, the gain is very great.

Question II.—Suppose a person to possess spectacles with which he reads ordinary print at twelve inches distance, should he or should he not use stronger glasses to read smaller print?

Reply.—Decidedly yes; but he should not use spectacles so strong as to require him to bring the object he wishes to see closer than from eight to nine inches from his eyes, for if he does he will experience a great strain in endeavouring to converge both his

eyes on the object. If the work is so fine as to require more optical power, he should wear spectacles with a strong lens, say from two to six inches focus, in *one* eye only, and a disc of thin black metal in the other. So long as he uses ample power to see the object easily, and does not work at it too long at a time or with an insufficient light, he will not injure his eyesight.

Question III.—Some opticians prefer to cut pebbles parallel to the axis of the crystal, the lenses thus cut showing prismatic bars under the polariscope. Should they be cut in this manner?

Reply.—Certainly not; they should be cut at right angles to the axis of the crystals of quartz. Several years ago the late Mr. Gassiot gave me a commission *carte-blanche* to make him the most powerful and perfect spectroscope I could, the prisms and lenses in the telescopes to be entirely of quartz (pebble). I found the lenses would not perform correctly unless they were carefully cut *exactly at right angles to the axis of the crystals*. As mostly used for spectacle eyes, they are cut at any and every angle, and they show dissimilar appearances under the polariscope. This must be wrong. Whenever a person is so fortunate as to possess a pair of eyes, it is certain that he should have a pair of exactly similar lenses in his spectacles.

Owing to the double refracting properties of the pebble, rays which enter the top and bottom of a lens cut parallel to the axis will be brought to a

focus at a different distance from that of the rays which enter it on the right and left hand.

Mr. Brudenell Carter, in his book on 'Good and Bad Sight,' says :

'The ordinary advantages of pebble lenses may be more than neutralized if they have not been cut from the original block in the right direction. The material has the curious property of being bi-refrangent in one particular direction—that is, the ray of light passing through it in this direction is split up into two, and two images of the object from which it proceeds are produced. In order to make a perfect pebble lens, its axis must be at right angles to the axis of double refraction; for otherwise, although the thickness will not be sufficient for two images to be produced, the single image may, nevertheless, be more or less blurred or bordered. The only security against this for the ordinary purchaser is to buy of an optician of repute, who will be more desirous to supply lenses of the best quality than to make the largest possible number out of a given piece of pebble.'

#### SHORT SIGHT.

Short sight, called technically '*myopia*,' is the opposite condition to that known as old sight—that is, objects at a distance cannot be seen distinctly. The eye in this condition cannot be focussed upon an object until it is brought within about twelve inches from the face. Minute objects at a distance of a few feet, which are easily seen by persons with full power of focussing, called normal or natural

vision, to short-sighted persons are invisible. There is little doubt that short sight is to some extent hereditary ; but it is mostly produced by reading in an imperfect light when very young. The book is held much closer to the face than it should be. This gives increased light, but the strain upon the focussing power of the eye is very great, and produces a permanent injury which can only be corrected by most carefully adapting concave lenses, which will throw the image of an object farther back into the eye, and cause it to fall correctly in focus on the retina.

Short sight should never be neglected, even though comparatively slight, and when extreme should receive the most skilful treatment. The lenses used should neither be too strong nor too weak, and two pairs differing in focus should be used, the weakest for reading and the strongest for walking or riding.

It is a common mistake to suppose that myopia, or short-sighted vision, is always strong and good for close objects. In my experience, a large majority of short-sighted persons have weak sight, although undoubtedly to them objects within their range of vision appear larger than to those who can see without strain.

Another common mistake is to suppose that the vision of short-sighted persons alters and improves rapidly with age. In the majority of cases the short-sightedness increases.

As short-sightedness is often accompanied by



actual disease of the eye, it should receive the best attention.

Another mistake is to suppose that short-sighted persons can do without spectacles to read with as they grow old. This does, indeed, sometimes happen, but such cases are rare.

I frequently have correspondents who, because they require short-sighted spectacles for walking, imagine they cannot possibly require magnifying lenses to read with, and are greatly surprised when I convince them to the contrary.

As I have said, an equally common mistake is to suppose that short-sighted vision always gets longer and improves with age. It very frequently gets still shorter, and unless spectacles, accurately suited to the case, are worn, the vision becomes rapidly and seriously impaired. *It is much to be regretted that people neglect their eyes so sadly, seldom taking medical advice respecting them until they find themselves actually going blind, though they will generally consult a surgeon respecting a slight deafness, which is comparatively unimportant.*

Failure of vision is often the first indication of some internal complaint which requires medical attention. With proper treatment, the clearness of vision is regained, though spectacles are mostly required, and aid materially its recovery.

It has been a great pleasure to me from time to time to hear persons say, when I have exactly suited them with lenses in very difficult cases of abnormal vision: 'Why, I can see better than I

have ever done in my life before.' But I have derived equal satisfaction from the knowledge that in several instances, by recommending immediate recourse to a skilful physician or oculist, I have indirectly been the means of saving my client from a dangerous illness, or possibly from loss of eyesight.

More than one of my valued scientific correspondents have gently hinted their regret at my devoting so much of my time to the adaptation of spectacles. They would prefer that I should direct my attention to improving still further the construction of the spectroscope, the microscope, or the astronomical telescope. I believe I am more usefully employed in a practical application of science to the benefit of humanity, and I know some of my medical friends support me in this opinion.

To give an illustration of what I mean :

Some four or five years since one of my scientific correspondents brought his son to me. He was a lad about 8 or 9 years old. Although so young he was a skilful musician, playing well from music plainly printed. But his eyesight was so defective that he could not, *with any spectacles*, see clearly more than three or four inches from his face. He was, therefore, compelled to learn his pieces by heart, and his playing was limited to the one or two pieces he could remember, for he soon forgot what he had with great pains learnt. Under these circumstances I contrived and made for him a pair

of small, very light binoculars or opera-glasses of aluminum, and mounted them on strong but light steel spectacle frames. The lenses were about one inch in diameter, and the tubes of the binoculars were little more than an inch long. With these he played from printed music on a grand piano readily. I made him spectacles with which he could read his books. Meanwhile he was put under skilful surgical treatment, and as time went on he required less and less optical assistance to his vision. Latterly he has achieved great distinction in his tasks, and plays from music by the aid of spectacles only.

The same gentleman sent his housemaid to me with a note, stating that her eyesight was so bad that she could not see to do her work; that she had been to an optician, and also to a hospital, and she had been told nothing could be done for her case. I was able to provide her with two pairs of spectacles: with one pair she could do her work, and with the other pair she could read well.

I have often had such persons come to me in great distress, lest they should lose their means of earning a livelihood. Now, I may be wrong, but I *feel* that in suiting such a case I am doing as much good as I should be by inventing another automatic spectroscope.

#### TEST TYPES.

Many children are blamed and punished for inattention or stupidity in not learning their tasks,

when they cannot see them. They are generally short-sighted, though sometimes long-sighted, and only require spectacles to assist their vision. To test their sight, get some printed letters exactly one-eighth of an inch high; place them at seven feet from the child whose sight has to be tested. If it cannot make the letters out clearly and easily, and read them aloud quickly, then either a skilful optician or an oculist should be consulted. The same test will answer equally well for adults as for children. A paragraph in block letters of type of the correct size for testing the sight in this simple manner is here given.

**HE WAS VERY SHORT, SPARE,  
AND WIRY; SINGULARLY PALE  
FOR A PERSON WHOSE LIFE  
WAS PASSED IN THE COUNTRY.  
THE FACE WAS IN SOME RE-  
SPECTS, BESIDES THIS, A MOST  
STRIKING FACE TO SEE. A PER-  
FECTLY SANE PERSON IN ALL  
HIS SAYINGS.**

#### ASTIGMATISM

Is a condition of the eye in which the cornea is not symmetrically spherical, but approaches the cylin-

drical ; that is to say, the front of the eye, instead of resembling in form a piece cut off from the side of a large marble, resembles a slice cut off from the

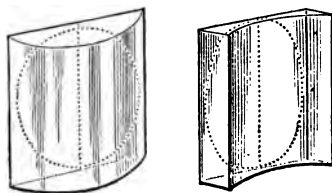


Fig. 27.

side of a cork, similar to the first figure in the above diagram.

With an eye of this form, lines are seen much more clearly in one direction than in another. For instance, the figures on a clock-face will be of different degrees of visibility, and will vary in sharpness as the dial is turned round.

The defect is corrected and clear vision given by adapting cylindrical lenses of the form shown in Fig. 27, in spectacles in such a manner that the cylindricity is in the contrary direction ; that is, at right angles to the cylindricity of the cornea.

Such lenses have to be put into trial frames with round eyes, in which the glasses will turn easily. The wearer should then close one eye, or cover it with the hand, and slowly and carefully turn the glass round while looking at the figures on a clock-dial, and the glass should be left in the position in which the figures are seen with equal clearness all

round the dial. The other glass should then be adjusted in the same way. The optician should carefully note the direction of the axes of the cylindrical lenses, and should cut them into an oval form and fit them up in oval frames.

I cannot recommend any person to try and get suited with spectacles for correcting astigmatism, when they know of its existence, by correspondence. The eyes mostly differ, both in the amount and direction of the astigmatism, and frequently differ in focus also, and the work of turning the lenses round to adjust them ought to be performed under the supervision of either a skilful optician or an oculist.

#### SPECTACLES AND FOLDERS COMPARED.

The question is continually being put to me: Which would you recommend me to have now, spectacles or folders ?

The answer I give depends on a variety of circumstances.

When taking to glasses for the first time I generally recommend folders, for two reasons—

1st. While people can manage to see by straining their vision, they will not be at the trouble of taking their spectacles out of the case and putting them on; and

2ndly. When they find themselves compelled to use them, they will not be at the pains of taking

them off and returning them to the case when they are not looking at near objects.

Where expense is not of consequence, it is the best plan always to have both spectacles and folders. The spectacles should be used for reading, writing, or drawing continuously for any length of time, and the folders whenever the vision requires assistance for a few minutes at frequent intervals. This is generally the case throughout the day, while the spectacles may be reserved for use at night-time. If used in this manner the spectacles may mostly with advantage be furnished with lenses a little stronger than those in the folders, as more assistance is required by the eyes in artificial light than in daylight.

Many persons who would like to use spring-folders say they cannot do so because they cannot get them to hold properly on the nose. This should not be so. I usually find that they have only been shown at the utmost two or three patterns, and one of these was expected to fit any face. Of course they would not; and having chosen a pair unsuitable for their features, disappointment was the natural result.

The bridges, springs, and rests should vary for eyes which are wide apart, which are of the usual width or narrow; and for noses broad or thin, or, in fact, which differ in any way from the general type of features.

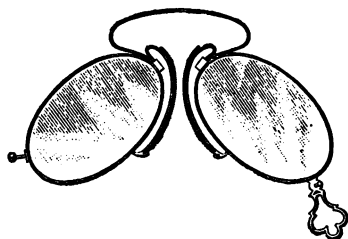


Fig. 28.

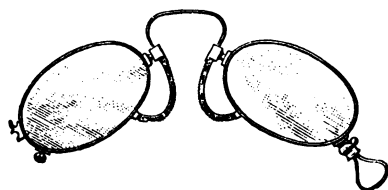


Fig. 29.

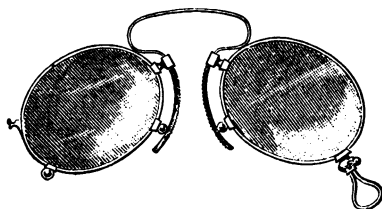


Fig. 30.

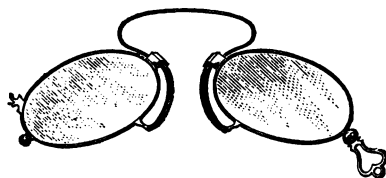


Fig. 31.



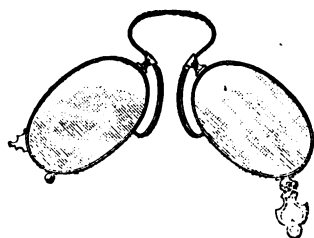


Fig. 32.

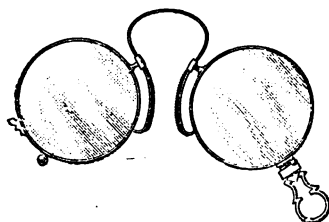


Fig. 33.

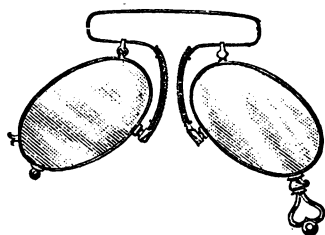


Fig. 34.

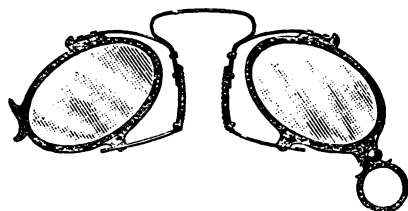


Fig. 35.

A glance at the different patterns of spring-folders I have had drawn and engraved (Figs. 28 to 35) will show the variety necessary to enable anyone to select a pair that will sit well on the face, will not pinch the nose, and yet will not be liable to fall off.

Those who have weak and extra-sensitive eyes, and suffer whenever they are in a bright light, but who experience no difficulty under favourable conditions in seeing clearly objects at all distances without the assistance of spectacles, would find great benefit from carrying two pairs of spring-folders. These occupy so little space that they will easily go into the waistcoat-pocket. One pair should be of white glass worked plane, the other of London smoke or neutral tint. The white glasses should be used to protect the eyes from wind, dust, and insects, and the tinted glasses to modify the glare of either direct or reflected light.

I have said that those whose eyes are weak should adopt the above contrivances, but all persons would do well to resort to them who wish to preserve their sight unimpaired, and all will experience great comfort at times from employing them. *Why should our eyes, which are the most sensitive and important organs of our bodies, be the only part we never think of protecting until they have been injured by our neglect?*

## UNEQUAL VISION.

By unequal vision I mean a person having two eyes which differ in focus. The optometer is the only good test for this inequality, which is much more common than is generally supposed. When the difference in focus is very great, as a rule spectacles which equalize the focus cannot be worn; the strain upon the eyes appears to be too great.

But, if a pair of spectacles be worn at first in which the lenses differ only slightly in focus, and the difference in focus is then slowly increased, the eyes may after a time become accustomed to the difference, and in this manner both may be suited and clearer vision with comfort obtained.

This is easy to understand; in all such cases vision with one eye has been disregarded or suppressed, and such an eye when called on to work feels like a left hand which is called on to use a pin or a knife for the first time.

About two years since a gentleman came to me who had just begun to require the aid of spectacles. On testing his eyes separately I found very great disparity of focus. I supplied him with a pair of trial spectacles in which the lenses exactly suited his eyes, so that they had both distinct vision at the same distance from a near object. The effect was pleasing to him for a few moments, yet he could not bear to look through them for more than a few minutes. As soon as I knew this, I made him a pair of spectacles in which one lens exactly suited the eye with which he had the clearest vision, and

the other lens differed considerably in focus in favour of the weaker eye. These were readily worn. After about two months I increased the strength of the lens for the weaker eye, and I did it three or four times at intervals of two or three months. Now the gentleman wears a convex lens of sixteen inches focus on the left eye and a lens of forty inches on the right eye with great advantage and perfect comfort, and spectacles in which the lenses are of the same focus are unbearable to him. It follows that the images seen by his two eyes, though equal in clearness, differ in size. This, as I anticipated, did not interfere with his seeing plainly, as two well-defined images of different dimensions will coalesce. If any person having equal vision, by which I mean eyes of equal focus, will take an ordinary spectroscope and place on one side of it, in the centre of the field of view, a bronze-copper half-penny, and on the other side, in the centre of the field of view, a bronze-copper pennypiece, although the two images given through the lenses will differ very greatly in size, he will see an image clearly defined midway between the size of the two coins.

I have got many persons to make this experiment, and in every case with the same result.

From a knowledge of this fact, I ventured upon the prediction that if two discs of colour exactly complementary to each other could be presented one to each eye, the resulting image seen by the observer would be white.

Mr. Stevenson, a member of the Council of the Royal Microscopical Society, some time afterwards used such discs, produced by means of polarized light, and the result was as I had predicted.

#### UNSYMMETRICAL FEATURES.

These also are very common indeed. No two halves of a leaf are ever exactly alike. Nor are the two hands of the same person, as regards the arrangement of the veins; and as a rule no person's nose is exactly symmetrical with the other features, nor do the two sides of the face exactly resemble each other. Usually the inequality is so small that it may be passed over; but whenever it is noticeable it should not be passed over, but the frames of the spectacles or folders should be made so as to exactly fit the face. It might be thought that this would make the want of symmetry more palpable, but the very reverse is the case. Spectacles with symmetrical frames, when worn by a person who has unsymmetrical features, cause the want of symmetry to be noticeable directly. A few months since I made a pair of spectacles for a distinguished American professor. I corrected the frames of these for a slight want of symmetry in the features, and the professor called upon me shortly afterwards and told me 'they were the greatest luxury he had ever had in his life.' All spectacles he had previously worn sprang out of position when he walked; and as the lenses were

very deep concaves the centres no longer corresponded with the centres of his eyes. 'Now,' he said; 'for the first time I am unconscious of the fact that I am wearing spectacles.'

#### SPECTACLES WITH INACCURATE LENSES.

One great evil results from spectacles being sold by people who are not opticians. The spectacles they sell, being manufactured by grosses to supply the wholesale market, are frequently, through the carelessness of the workmen, glazed *with lenses which differ in focus*. The effect of wearing such spectacles soon becomes painful, and if persisted in, results in serious mischief to the eyesight of the wearer. I have known of many instances, but one very interesting and peculiar case I recollect well.

A minister came to me for a valuable astronomical instrument he had been commissioned to purchase by a friend. When he had done this he asked me if I would examine and test his eyes. I found the left eye inflamed, but both eyes equal in focus, and very nearly equal in acuteness of vision. On inquiry, I found that whenever he read or wrote the inflamed eye became rapidly worse. I then asked him about his spectacles. He said he had purchased a pair some weeks previously in a country town, and he now recollected that his left eye had troubled him much more since he had worn them. On hearing this I tested the lenses in his

spectacles separately, and found *they differed six inches in focus!* As the gentleman had some knowledge of optics, I was able easily to prove this to him; and upon my doing so he kindly said to me: 'Pray accept of this pair of spectacles, Mr. Browning, and keep them in your cabinet of curiosities.' I did, and they are in my possession still.

I recommended him to use a little goulard-water to his eye, and to give it all the rest he could. At the same time I furnished him with a pair of spectacles suited to his requirements; those he had purchased, as well as having lenses dissimilar in focus, were much too strong for him.

As he was staying in London for some time, he favoured me by calling on me soon afterwards to tell me that in a few days his eye got quite well. Now, in this case he might have consulted a clever medical man, and yet the cause of the mischief might have remained unsuspected and undiscovered. Even in the case of London opticians, where a large stock of good spectacles is kept, it is often thought that anyone may attend to a person who requires spectacles. From this cause I have frequently applications from persons who have failed to get suited elsewhere. One case particularly occurs to me. About three months since, late one afternoon, a lady came in who told me she was nearly 80 years old; she said that she had been told by her medical adviser, or a medical friend, to go to one of the largest opticians in town for a pair of spectacles; that she had just been to them,

and that they had assured her that they could give her no spectacles which would be of any use to her, and that she must never expect to read again. This had grieved and alarmed her. In less than a quarter of an hour I had suited her with a pair of spectacles, with which she could read the small type of a daily newspaper almost as quickly as I could read it myself.

At the risk of repeating myself, I must here say that as a rule the whole of the low-class spectacles sold at prices varying in price from 1s. to 2s. 6d. per pair, have *inaccurate lenses* in this sense, that the centres of the lenses—that is, the thickest part of a convex or magnifying lens which is used to correct old sight, or the thinnest part of a concave or diminishing lens which is necessary to correct short sight—is never in the centre of the oval where it should be so as to come opposite to the pupil of the eye when worn.

Now it is well known that squinting in children can frequently be cured under medical advice by giving them spectacles to wear in which the centres of the glasses are wider than the centres of the eyes. This causes the wearer to turn the eyes outwards, and eventually the eyes when the spectacles are taken off remain in the right direction.

A similar action is exerted in all cases where the lenses are out of centre, as I have described; and though the eyes are not turned, yet the vision is greatly impaired by their continued use. *Such spectacles are disastrous when they are not required.*



HOW TO PUT ON SPECTACLES OR SPRING  
FOLDERS.

It might seem unnecessary to give instructions over such a simple matter as this, but experience has taught me that a great many persons put on their spectacles in such a way that they actually injure their sight with them.

Spectacles for reading, drawing, or doing needle-work should be worn well down on the nose, and so should spring-folders. They assist the vision more when worn in this manner without putting so much strain on the eyes: the wearer is also able to look *over* them at distant objects. When worn to correct old sight, that is, indistinct vision of near objects, they should always be taken off when moving about. It is dangerous to go down steps, alight from a carriage, or get out of a train with them on, as refraction causes objects to look higher than they are when seen through them.

Short-sighted persons should wear their spectacles (which should have a low bridge), well up in front of the eyes, well away from them, so as to be quite clear of the eye-lashes.

Both with spectacles and folders great care should be taken to put them on evenly, straight across the face, with the centres of the glasses opposite to the centres or pupils of the eyes. Most persons put them on with the glass for the right eye lowest through holding them principally with the right hand.

This remark applies more particularly to spring-folders, which are often adjusted on the nose with the aid of the right hand only. The cord by which the folders are suspended is also attached to the rim of the right eyeglass, and gets occasionally pulled down a little. The result is that the right eyeglass is frequently from a quarter to half an inch lower down on the face than the left eyeglass, as shown in the engraving, and this puts a strain on both



Fig. 36.

eyes. Persons who wish to avoid this error should put on their eyeglasses in front of a mirror, and adjust them correctly. When they have no mirror at hand they should put them on by using both hands and with a slight tendency to place *the glass for the left eye the lowest*. If this precaution be taken it will generally be found that the glasses will really be set symmetrically on the face as they should be.

**THE CARE OF SPECTACLES.**

It seems never to occur to most people that spectacles require taking care of. They are laid down anywhere, and the glasses get scratched, or they are let fall and bent, and put out of all shape and make ; then they are roughly straightened and put on again. Strangely enough, when they are worn greatly distorted in shape for some length of time the wearer cannot bear to look through a pair of spectacles of symmetrical form. Until they lose or break the old spectacles past mending, though they are ashamed of their shabby and unsightly appearance, and annoyed at the difficulty they experience in getting them to hold on the face, they will not bear the strain on their eyes of wearing a new pair.

Spectacles and spring-folders should be kept in good shape, and opticians should be ready to set them right for their customers from time to time free of charge or for a nominal charge only if no new parts or repairs are required. Gold spectacles can be kept in shape best, as from the great ductility of the metal they can be bent any number of times without breaking. Gold spectacles can also be repaired easier and stronger than any others. The broken parts of steel spectacles are soldered together with brass. The broken parts of gold spectacles ought to be soldered with gold, and become as strong as the other parts of the frames.

Spectacle lenses should be kept clean by wiping them with a soft, well-worn cambric handkerchief or a piece of soft wash-leather. A silk handkerchief, so often recommended, is not good for this purpose, as it makes the glasses electrical and causes the dust to adhere to them.

Both spectacles and folders should be protected by being carried and kept in rigid cases. The flat snap-catch cases generally used for gold spectacles and folders are the best, the frog-mouth are next in usefulness, and the soft cases with a flap and tuck are the worst, as under very slight pressure they bend, and the lenses or frames are broken.

#### SINGLE EYEGLASSES.

Wearing a single eyeglass has happily of late become less common than it used to be, but it should be confined to those who are blind with one eye. I need say nothing respecting the unpleasant expression given to the face caused by the contortion of the features, which is made to keep the eyeglass in position. This is a small evil compared to the injury done to the eyesight by working one eye at the expense of the other.

Those who wear a single eyeglass soon acquire a habit of seeing with the eye only on which it is worn. The vision of the other eye is suppressed; that is, the image which is formed on the retina remains unseen, a convincing proof that people do

not see with their eyes, but with their brains. Suppressing the vision of the eye is almost as hurtful as straining the vision. The muscles of the eye that remain unused wither and lose their power, and the sight of the eye is rapidly impaired. Yet even in such cases as this, by the use of proper lenses the sight may be to a great extent regained.

#### INVISIBLE SPECTACLES.

Invisible spectacles or folders have two advantages; they are of the lightest construction that can be made to act efficiently, and the lenses cannot come out of the frames because the frames are smaller than the lenses, being let into the glasses, and thus rendered invisible to anyone in front of those who wear them; but as they are so slight, they should only be worn of the best material and workmanship. And here I must warn my readers against confounding these invisible spectacles and folders with the so-called *frameless* spectacles and folders. As now generally made and supplied, these are a disgrace to the optician's art. The springs, sides, and loops in these wretched things are riveted directly on to the glasses, while the glasses are frequently twice as thick on one side as they are on the other. This causes them to act as prisms, twisting the eyes, and having a tendency to produce double vision.

The price charged for these contrivances is very

low, and yet they are most expensive to wear, for the glasses crack across, and drop in halves just where the metal is riveted on to them.

#### HOW TO BLIND YOURSELF.

At the risk of being misunderstood I must express my surprise that so many persons exercise their utmost economy in their spectacles at the expense of their eyesight. I fear I shall scarcely be believed when I say that I have seen a gentleman reading his newspaper day after day in a railway carriage by holding less than half a single lens which had belonged to a pair of frameless folders up to one of his eyes between his finger and thumb. I give an



Fig. 37.

illustration of this optical instrument of torture (Fig. 37). Let anyone try to read with a small piece of a lens, held in one hand in a railway carriage in motion in the manner I have described, to realize my meaning. When the spectacles or folders are fitted properly to the face the lenses and the eyes move together, and those who read in a train with spectacles experience no more

difficulty in reading with them than those do who are able to read without them. But when reading with a lens held in the hand, the arm and hand are jerked in one direction, and the head and eye in another, and thus the motion of the print before the sight is greatly magnified. Move any lens before the eye while looking at an object through it, and the object will have an apparent motion given to it directly.

While many persons exercise such unwise economy as I have referred to, there is, I am aware, a large minority, and I have reason to believe an increasing one, who are anxious to use only the best spectacles they can obtain, exactly suited to their case. For the guidance of some of these I have produced this book. Written under the pressure of numerous engagements, I cannot hope that it will be found entirely free from errors and imperfections, but whatever shortcomings may be detected in it I will do my utmost to amend in a second edition should one be called for.

THE END.

# BROWNING'S NEW METHOD

OF

Suiting Residents in the Country with Spectacles or  
Folders by Correspondence.

FULL PARTICULARS SENT POST FREE.

## JOHN BROWNING,

*Optical and Physical Instrument Maker to Her  
Majesty's Government.*

63, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

### Testimonials.

*Extracts from letters received from Country residents who have been  
suited with Spectacles by Browning's new method.*

The eyes of unequal focus, a very difficult case.

Belfast, August 18th, 1882.

SIR,—I received the glasses to-day, and have great pleasure in informing you that they suit perfectly.

I am, yours respectfully, (Signed) W. M. V.

Bury, Lancashire, November 10th, 1882.

DEAR SIR,—Herewith I hand you 5s. 4d. balance of account as per enclosed invoice. No. 16 glasses suit me very well. I am extremely obliged for the trouble you have taken in suiting me, and as opportunity offers I shall recommend your system to my friends.

Yours faithfully, (Signed) F. C.

Mr. JOHN BROWNING.

Penzance, 20th November, 1882.

DEAR SIR.—Thanks for second consignment of Spectacles. The blue tinted pair suit me beautifully, kindly let me know my indebtedness to you.

I am, Sir, yours truly, (Signed) S. M.

Second letter from the above.

Penzance, 27th November, 1882.

DEAR SIR.—I herewith enclose 6d. balance of Spectacles. Allow me to tender you my grateful thanks for your kind attention, and for the nice cool and soft effect of the Spectacles.

I am, Sir, yours truly, (Signed) S. M.

JOHN BROWNING, Esq., 63, Strand, London.

Chithill, Northumberland, November 30th, 1882.

Miss W. has chosen a pair of Mr. BROWNING's Spectacles, which suit her sight extremely well, and will certainly send to Mr. BROWNING again, should Miss W. require them.

Tredegar, 20th December, 1882.

SIR,—The Folders have reached me safely, and suit my patient exceedingly well.

Yours truly, (Signed) G. B.

Mr. J. BROWNING, 63, Strand, W.C.



## TESTIMONIALS—continued.

Darlington, 7th January, 1883.

SIR,—I have to thank you for the Glasses you sent me with such despatch, they suit me very well indeed, and are of much comfort and assistance.

Yours faithfully, (Signed) W. B. M.

Pembroke, 7th February, 1883.

SIR,—Herewith is enclosed a P.O.O. for £2 12s. 6d., the remainder due on the Glasses and Case supplied, and I beg to inform you that they give entire satisfaction.

Yours respectfully, (Signed) W. M.

J. BROWNING, Esq., 63, Strand, London.

Bedford, February 20th, 1883.

DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for the speedy return of Spectacles and the trouble you have taken over them, they are so delightfully cool to the eyes. I have pleasure in enclosing P.O.O. to amount of a/c.

Yours faithfully, (Signed) C. S. A.

Mr. J. BROWNING.

Padstow, March 8th, 1883.

SIR,—The box containing the Folders safely to hand, with which I am very much pleased, they suit me splendidly.

I am, yours very respectfully, (Signed) L. W.

To Mr. BROWNING.

Walsall, May 28th, 1883.

To J. BROWNING, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—The Spectacles fitted with pebbles cut at right angles to the axis, which you have made for me, suit me admirably. Your method of ascertaining what kind of Spectacles the eye requires is at once ingenious and effective. Accept my thanks. I enclose cheque for the amount of bill.

Yours faithfully, (Signed) Wm. C.

Folkestone, 6th June, 1883.

DEAR SIR,—It affords me much pleasure to inform you that the Spectacles with which you supplied both my wife and self in April last have given us perfect satisfaction; they are light, cool, and clear, and, although used every night, have in no measure given fatigue or pained the eye.

I am, yours faithfully, (Signed) G. E. T.

Plymouth, June 18th, 1883.

JOHN BROWNING, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Enclosed you will find two postal orders for 11s. as per account. The Spectacles give great satisfaction.

Yours faithfully, (Signed) F. E. A.

Dinnet, Aberdeen, 22nd June, 1883.

JOHN BROWNING, Esq., London.

DEAR SIR,—The Spectacles are safely to hand, and are a perfect success; not the faintest difference is detectable between the vision of the two eyes; the frames please me much, as they have what all frames should have, a fair strength in arms and bridge. Thanking you very much for your patient kindness,

I remain, very truly yours, (Signed) G. D.

The Originals of the above Testimonials can be seen on application.

**JOHN BROWNING, 63, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.**

# LIST OF PRICES OF SPECTACLES

SUPPLIED BY

**JOHN BROWNING.**

				Per pair.	
				s.	d.
Plain Steel Spectacles, with Glass Lenses	-	-	-	2	6
Good ditto ditto	ditto	ditto	-	4	6
Superior Light ditto	Best Glass ditto	-	-	7	6
Ditto ditto	Pebble ditto	-	-	10	6
Very Superior ditto	Best Brazillian Pebble ditto	-	-	15	0
Best ditto	Axis Cut ditto	-	-	21	0
Invisible Steel Spectacles, with Hook or Curled Sides,					
Grooved Lenses for the frame to fit into, thereby giving					
them a very light appearance				-	10 6
Best ditto, ditto	-	-	-	-	15 0
Gold Spectacles according to weight and quality, from				-	18 6
Good Steel Spectacles with Coloured Plane Glass				-	4 6
Superior Light Steel Spectacles with best ditto, ditto				-	7 6
Best ditto, ditto				-	10 6
Superior Light Steel Spectacles, with Concave or Convex					
Lenses of Coloured Glass for protecting the eyes from					
strong light				-	10 6
Best ditto, ditto	-	-	-	-	15 0
Best Steel Spectacles with Globular Glass, Smoke or Blue					
Tinted				-	10 6
Ditto, ditto, with Wire or Silk gauze sides, as used for					
India and Egypt				-	15 0
Best Steel Spectacles, D-shaped Eyes with Glass sides				-	10 0

Cases in every instance are included in the price.

*Turnpin or Double Sides, 2s. extra.*

*Hook or Curled Sides 2s. 6d. extra.*

For prices of Spring Folders see next page.

## PRICES OF SPRING FOLDERS.

	Per pair.	
	s.	d.
Good Steel Frames, with clear Glass Lenses	-	4 6
Superior Steel Frames, with Best Glass Lenses	-	7 6
Best light Steel Grooved Invisible Frames	-	10 6
Best light Steel Frames, Nickelized to prevent rust, and fitted with best Grooved Glass Lenses	-	15 0
Tortoiseshell Frames, with best Glass Lenses	-	7 6
Best Tortoiseshell Frames, with best Glass Lenses	-	10 6
Finest Tortoiseshell Frames, cut from the Solid Shell	-	15 0
Solid Nickel Frames, made without join, very substantial and will not rust, with best Glass Lenses	-	18 6
Gold Folders according to weight and quality, from	-	18 6

Cases in every instance are included in the price.

*Brazilian Pebbles fitted to any of above Folders, 5s. extra.*

*Browning's Axis Cut Pebbles, 10s. extra.*

## JOHN BROWNING,

*Optical and Physical Instrument Maker to Her Majesty's  
Government, the Royal Society, the Royal Observatories  
of Greenwich, Edinburgh, etc., etc.*

63, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

**JOHN BROWNING, 63, Strand, London, W.C.**

(ESTABLISHED ONE HUNDRED YEARS.)

## THE "EURYSCOPIC" BINOCULAR.

Has the  
largest  
possible  
field of



view,  
giving  
delightfully  
easy vision.

In case, £2 2s.; sent free for £2 2s. 6d.

*Illustrated Catalogue of Binoculars post free.*

### TESTIMONIALS.

"DEAR SIR,—Just a word respecting the Binocular you supplied me with a short time since. I must say how pleased I am with it. It is really a beautiful instrument, and comes into focus something like a good telescope, quite sharp. The way it shows distant objects is something wonderful. What surprised me most was to see trees and hedgerows upon the horizon, which to the naked eye looked like clouds.

"Mr. J. BROWNING."

"Birmingham, August 15th, 1883.

"Yours truly, J. W.

"Spalding, December 16th, 1882.

"DEAR SIR,—I am happy to apprise you that the Binocular Glass which you supplied to me in July last was used by me on board the *Gallia* (Cunard Line), on which were more than 350 cabin passengers, in our trip to the United States, and for more than 20,000 miles altogether, including my return voyage by the *British Crown* (Red Star Line), and that it was so much approved that many persons begged the loan of it, preferring it for its commanding greater clearness of vision than their own glasses, some of which cost ten times as much money.

"I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully, H. WATKINSON.

"Mr. J. BROWNING, 63, Strand, London."

## THE "ECONOMICAL" FIELD GLASS.

This Binocular has achromatic object-glasses one and a half inches in diameter, and sliding shades to shelter the object-glasses from sun or rain, and is fitted in a solid leather sling case.

Price £1 5s.; sent free for £1 5s. 6d.

*Illustrated Catalogue of Binoculars post free.*

**JOHN BROWNING, 63, Strand, London, W.C.**

**JOHN BROWNING, 63, Strand, London, W.C.**  
**THE NEW THREE-POWER GLASS.**  
**Very Powerful.**

By turning a stud, the eye - pieces are made changeable at pleasure, so that the glass becomes suitable for either theatre, field, or marine purposes.

Price from £4 4s.

*Sent free.*

Illustrated Catalogue of Binoculars free.

The Trade supplied.



**THE "PANERGETIC" OPERA, FIELD, AND RACE GLASS.**  
 For general use, brilliant light, extensive field of view, and sharp definition.



"Brings out figures with marvellous distinctness, and has a very large field of view, and so many advantages over the other Binoculars that we have seen, that we confidently award very high praise indeed."—*Popular Science Review*.

Price £4 10s., £5 10s., and £6 10s. Illustrated Catalogue of Binoculars free.

October, 1883.



# CHATTO & WINDUS'S

## LIST OF BOOKS.

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